

them was one of degree, not of kind. In the world of industry vertical divisions between district and district still cut deeper than horizontal fissures between class and class. The number of those who could reasonably be described as independent, since they owned their own tools and controlled their own businesses, formed a far larger proportion of the population than is the case in capitalist societies,

The second fact was even more decisive. The business classes, as a power in the State, were still sufficiently young to be conscious of themselves as something like a separate order, with an outlook on religion and politics peculiarly their own, distinguished, not merely by birth and breeding, but by their social habits, their business discipline, the whole bracing atmosphere of their moral life, from a Court which they believed to be godless and an aristocracy which they knew to be spendthrift. The estrangement—for it was no more—was of shorter duration in England than in any other European country, except Switzerland and Holland. By the latter part of the seventeenth century, partly as a result of the common struggles which made the Revolution, still more perhaps through the redistribution of wealth by commerce and finance, the former rivals were on the way to be compounded in the gilded clay of a plutocracy

embracing both.
The landed gentry were increasingly
sending their sons
into business ; ^{1<} the tradesman meek and
much a
liar ^{f>} looked forward, as a matter of course,
to buying
an estate from a bankrupt noble. Georgian
England
was to astonish foreign observers, like
Voltaire and
Montesquieu, as the Paradise of the
bourgeoisie, in
which the prosperous merchant shouldered
easily aside
the impoverished bearers of aristocratic
names."

That consummation, however, was
subsequent to
the great divide of the Civil War, and, in
the main,
to the tamer glories of the Revolution. In
the germinat-
ing period of Puritanism, the commercial
classes, though